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For Immediate Release

Mayor Announces Safe Routes Grant in Response to Student Concerns

Kankakee, IL (April 25, 2019) – Mayor Wells-Armstrong announced the awarding of the Safe Routes to School grant for the City of Kankakee on Tuesday, April 23, 2019 alongside King Middle School student Ty Alderson, School Superintendent Genevra Walters, Governor JB Pritzker, and Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. This achievement was initiated by Ty Alderson in 2016 when he wrote a letter to the Mayor expressing his concern about the safety in front of his school. Upon researching, City Engineer Neil Piggush learned about the Safe Routes to School Grant from the Illinois Department of Transportation and worked with school administrators and students to fulfill the application requirements necessary. IDOT received 160 applications and Kankakee was one of 39 projects awarded.

“I am extremely excited for our kids. This initiative started when I received a letter from a student who was concerned about safety,” said Kankakee Mayor Chasity Wells-Armstrong. “This is a great example of government working for people and our kids. This is a Civics lesson they will not forget.”

Safe Routes to School is a federally funded program administered by the Illinois Department of Transportation. The program encourages applicants to create projects in their community that improve safety and reduce traffic in areas around schools. Projects can include improvements such as new sidewalks, signs or lights to help reduce speeding or other traffic issues, education, and community outreach programs. “Safe Routes to School empowers communities to make decisions about where funding can do the most good,” said Acting Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman.

“I’m proud to announce that dozens of Safe Routes to School projects will be carried out across the state at no cost to Illinois,” said Gov. JB Pritzker. “Using federal funds, we will be making sidewalk improvements, increasing signage, making crosswalks safer, and providing equipment to crossing guards and parent patrol programs. These projects will allow more of our students to safely walk or bike to school and will make our communities safer and healthier places to live.”

The City of Kankakee was awarded \$200,000.00 out of the 5.5 million of the Safe Routes to School funding. City and school leaders are in the beginning phase of developing a collaborative project that may include widening crosswalks, pedestrian medians, and other improvements to help reduce the speed of motorist on Court Street/East IL 17 running in front of King Middle School. Over the past five years there has been over 20 reported traffic incidents near the school.

The City of Kankakee was founded in 1853 and is the county seat for Kankakee County. The City is located on the Kankakee River which has been recognized as one of the cleanest in the state of Illinois. The City of Kankakee is dedicated to protecting, building, and nurturing the community they serve while enhancing lives. For more information on the City of Kankakee please visit their website at www.citykankakee-il.gov.